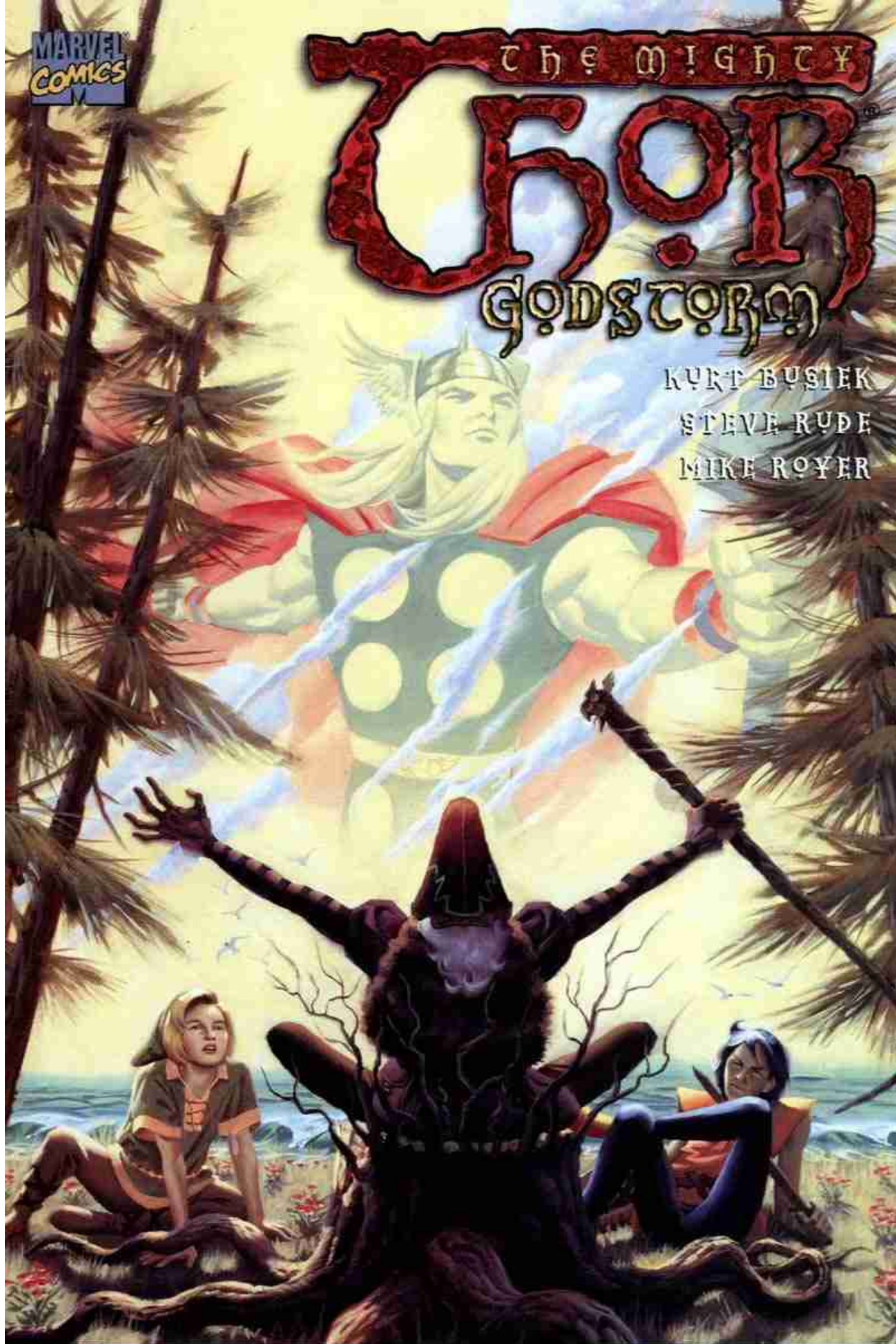


MARVEL
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THE MIGHTY THOR GODS TO RM

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HUH? Y-YOUR PARDON, ELDER--
I DID NOT SEE YOU THERE.

BUT I MEANT
NOTHING--NOTHING
BUT TO GIVE WILF HERE
A RESpite FROM
DRUDGERY, AND TO
EXERCISE HIS
SKILLS AT--

SILENCE!
YOU ARE A
TEMPTER AND
A WASTREL--
I SEE IT IN
YOUR EYES.

WERE THE FUTURE
OF THE NORTHMEN'S RACE
ENTRUSTED TO SUCH AS
YOU, OUR GLORIES
WOULD BE ENDED IN A
GENERATION.

YOU SHUN WORK IN
FAVOR OF GAMES AND
FOOLERY. YOU HAVE NO
FIRE, NO HEART. I
DESPAIR AT THE SIGHT,
AND FEAR FOR THE
FUTURE.

TRULY, SIR--
HE MEANT NO
HARM. BUT I
CONFESS-- I
DO NOT UNDER-
STAND.

ARE WE NOT WARRIORS?
SHOULD WE NOT TEST
AND HONE OUR SKILL
AT BATTLE, AGAINST
OUR FUTURE VOYAGES
OF PLUNDER?

PLUNDER? WHAT DO
FINGERLINGS LIKE
YOURSELVES KNOW OF
SUCH THINGS?
THERE IS MORE TO
THE NORTHMEN THAN
MERE PLUNDER!

SHOULD YOU TRULY
SEEK THE FIRE OF A
WARRIOR'S HEART, THE WAY
TO TRIUMPH OVER ALL
CHALLENGES-- THE SECRET
IS THERE, IN FRONT OF
YOUR EYES. A SECRET
WORTH THE KNOWING.

A PITY THAT THE
CALLOW YOUNG ARE
SO DEAF TO IT.

UH...
SECRET,
SIR? I-IF WE
COULD BUT
HEAR...

PAH. WASTED
BREATH, I AM
SURE OF IT. STILL,
FOLLOW ME.









OUNDS! YON CLOUDS
DRIFT AWAY...
HARMLESS!

THOR, SON OF MY HEART--WE ARE
ALL IN THY DEBT! CLEAR
SKIES LIE AHEAD!

AND YET, BEHOLD--THE TINY
CLOUD SEEMS NOT TO HAVE
LOST ALL ITS FURY!

IT LOOSES A
SMALL DOWNPOUR--
A BRIEF SHOWER--
ON SOME POOR,
UNLUCKY SOUL,
BUT WHO--?



HAAAAHAHA!
THE POOR SOUL IS
LOKI HIMSELF!
WHAT TERRIBLE
LUCK TO BEFALL
A GOD AS
PRIDEFUL
AS HE!

STILL,
MISTRESS--
HE IS SAID
TO BE GOD
OF MISCHIEF,
AFTER ALL.

SURELY HE
CAN SEE THE
HUMOR IN
THIS...



A THOUSAND PARDONS, HALF-
BROTHER! MY SKILL IS NOT YET
WHAT IT MUST BE-- I
SHALL HAVE TO PRACTICE
MORE!

BUT STILL,
'TIS ONLY WATER--
NO HARM HATH
BEEN DONE,
EH?



It was actually
the power of
LOKI'S SPELL that
drew the raging
storm to him.
But for all that,
Thor's apologies
fell on DEAF
EARS...

BY ALL THE SPIRITS
OF NIFLHEIM!
TRULY, THOR-- THOU
SHALT PAY FOR THIS
HUMILIATION--!



AND THE RESULT OF LOKI'S MACHINATIONS WOULD BE KNOWN SOON... BUT NOT IN ASGARD. FOR LESS THAN A MOONCHANGE LATER, ON THESE VERY WATERS...

... A DARK AND DANGEROUS FLEET SAILED FOR OUR SHORES.

THIS WAS LONG BEFORE THE TIME OF ANY MAN ALIVE TODAY, BUT STILL DID OUR CLANS FARM THESE LANDS AND FISH THESE WATERS.

AND OUR CHIEFTAIN DID ORDER OUT THE FLEET, TO MEET THE Foe...

BERSEKIR, OUT OF THULE. THEY SEEK NOT PLUNDER, BUT BLOOD AND DEATH...

THEY OUTNUMBER US, MY CHIEFTAIN. AND IT IS SAID THAT THE BERSEKIR KNOW NO MERCY, THAT THEY FIGHT 'TIL THEY DIE, OR 'TIL THE LAST Foe FALLS.

THIS SHALL BE A BLOODY DAY INDEED.

LET THEM DO THEIR WORST, RANULF. WE SHALL DO OUR BEST.

I PRAY OUR GODS HEAR OUR PLEAS. FOR ONLY WITH THEIR HELP--

WE ARE VIKINGS, RANULF. WE DO NOT PLEAD.

HEAR ME, GODS OF FAR ASGARD! HEAR ME, THOR! HEAR ME, TYR AND HEIMDALL! WE CALL ON YOU, NOT FOR AID, FOR OUR STRENGTH IS OUR OWN!

WE CALL ON YOU MERELY TO TAKE NOTICE-- TO SEE THAT WE ARE NORTHMEN, WORTHY OF YOU! SEE HOW WE FIGHT, THOR! SEE HOW WE DIE!

And high above, Thor HEARD. And Thor came, as requested, to see how our brave men faced adversity.

And Thor was most deeply impressed...

SUCH COURAGE AS THIS IS RARE INDEED-- AND SHOULD NOT PERISH FROM THE FACE OF MIDGARD.

THOUGH THESE MEN DID NOT ASK THOR'S AID, AS BEFITS THEIR WARRIOR CODE--

-- STILL, THEY SHALL HAVE IT, AS BEFITS THE CHOICE OF A GOD!

BLOW, WINDS! CRACK, SKIES! I CALL UPON THEE, STORM OF THE AIR!

I CALL UPON THE MIGHTIEST OF THY NUMBER! COME HITHER, GREATEST OF STORMS -- COME HITHER AND APPEAR--

-- NOW!

BAM!

And...

THOU ART HERE!

COME, THEN-- RAGE OVER THE SEA! RAGE LOW-- AND STRIKE THAT INVADING FLEET, BLOWING THEM AWAY-- SO FAR THEY WILL NEVER FIND THEIR WAY HERE AGAIN!

And even as Thor gave his commands, in Loki's private chambers in Asgard...



THE FOOL!
THIS IS MY CHANCE!

THOR SEEKS TO AID THOSE PATHETIC MORTALS -- AND THUS DELIVERS TO ME THE OPPORTUNITY I HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR!



HEAR ME, O STORM!
HEAR THE WORDS
OF LOKI, WHO
CAME TO THEE AS A
FRIEND!

IT IS AS
I TOLD
THEE!

THOR MERELY USES THEE, TO SATISFY HIS CASUAL WHIMS! PUTS THEE AT THE SERVICE OF MERE MORTALS, WHO SHOULD BE BENEATH THY NOTICE!

SUCH A TASK
OFFENDS THY DIGNITY
-- IS AN AFFRONT TO
THY MIGHT! THOU
ART TOO GREAT
FOR SUCH AS
THIS!



And the storm hovered,
frozen, unsure what to do...

WHAT CHICANERY
IS THIS? THE STORM
DOES NOT STRIKE --
DOES NOT SMITE
THE ENEMY!

HO, WINDS --
ATTEND THY MASTER!
THOR HATH ORDERED
THEE -- AND THOU
MUST OBEY!



Loki arrived, then, invisible to all but the storm itself...

I CALL ON
THEE, STORM --!

DOST THOU
HEAR? HE
ORDERS THEE
LIKE A DOG!

SURELY THOU
UNDERSTANDEST
NOW! THOU CANNOT
FOLLOW A BUFFOON
SUCH AS THIS! THINE
IS THE POWER! THINE
IS THE MIGHT!

THOU MUST
TAKE THY POWER
UNTO THYSELF,
GREAT ONE --





--AND DESTROY THY SLAVE-MASTER!

DESTROY THOR!!

YES!

NO LONGER SHALL I OBEY! NOW SHALL I BE FREE! NOW SHALL THOR DIE!

And the storm TURNED ON THOR, striking him with UNIMAGINABLE WINDS, tearing him into the skies.



And below...

MY CHIEFTAIN! WE MUST MAKE FOR LAND! WE CANNOT WITHSTAND THESE--

NO! IF I TRULY SEE WHAT I THINK I DO-- WE MUST PUSH FORWARD! INTO THE STORM!

MAN THE OARS, MEN! FORWARD! PRESS FORWARD!



AIEEEE!

As they did, the ship was BATTERED, shaken like a child's toy, but still he pressed on...

SIR! WE'LL LOSE THE SHIP!

ONWARD! ROW ONWARD!



Above... MY HAMMER!

THE MAELSTROM WRENCHED MJOLNIR FROM MY GRASP--AND I CANNOT BREATHE, CANNOT CONCENTRATE--

--CANNOT CALL IT TO RETURN TO ME WITH ENOUGH WILL--!

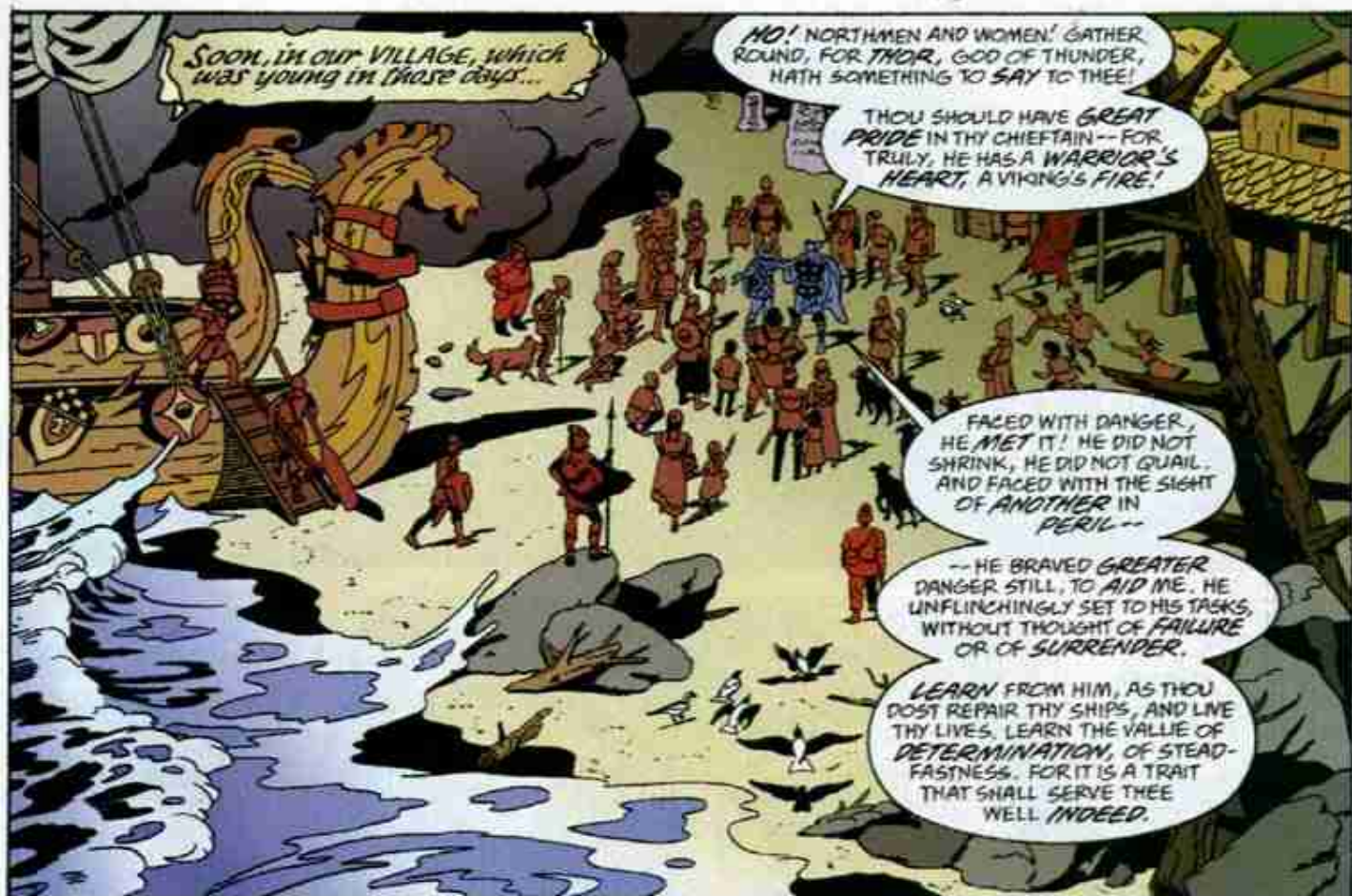


And Thor's breath grew SHALLOW, and his vision began to darken...











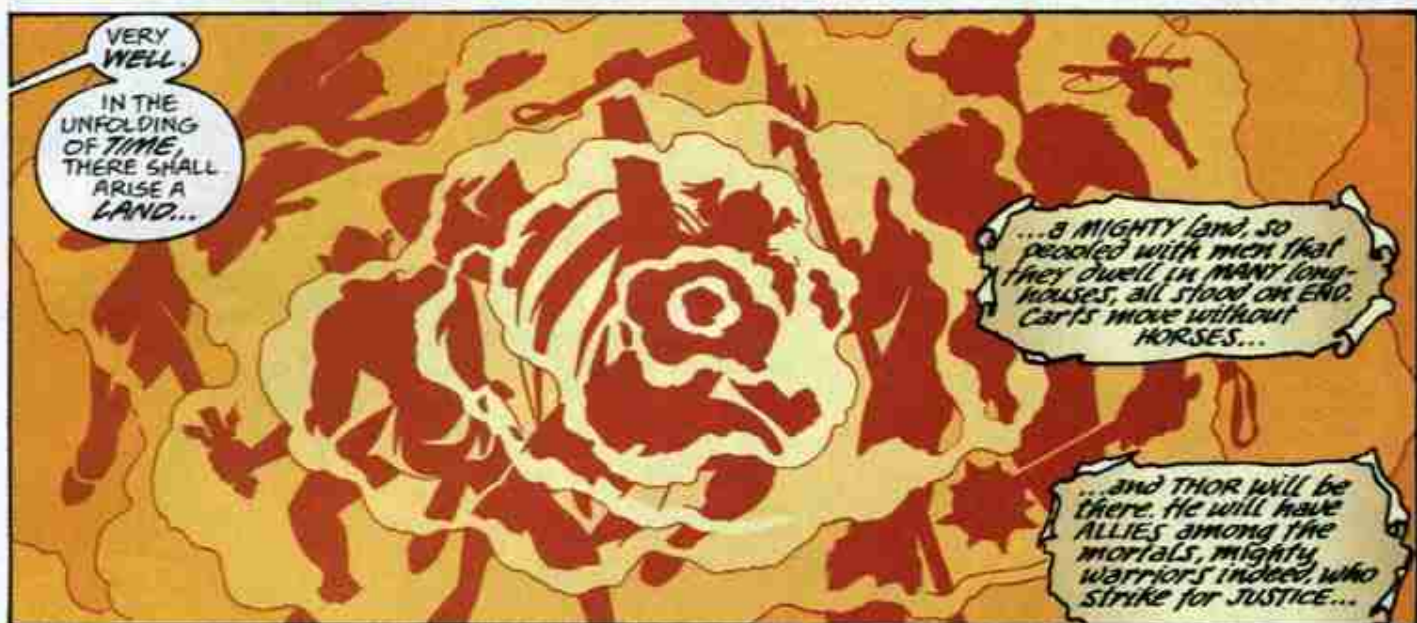


HMM.

IT SEEMS THE
GODSTORM WILL
RETURN TWICE--
TWICE AT LEAST--
BUT NOT FOR
MANY, MANY
TURNS OF THE
SEASONS.

TELL
US, WISE
ONE!

TELL US
WHAT YOU SEE--
WHAT THE RUNESTICKS
SHOW YOU!



VERY
WELL.

IN THE
UNFOLDING
OF TIME,
THERE SHALL
ARISE A
LAND...

...A MIGHTY LAND, SO
PEOPLED WITH MEN THAT
THEY DWELL IN MANY LONG-
HOUSES, ALL STOOD ON END.
CARTS MOVE WITHOUT
HORSES...

...AND THOR WILL BE
THERE. HE WILL HAVE
ALLIES AMONG THE
MORTALS, MIGHTY
WARRIORS INDEED, WHO
STRIKE FOR JUSTICE...



"MORTALS?"

"WHY WOULD
A GOD ALLY
HIMSELF WITH
MORTALS?"

HUSH,
RAPSCALLIONS.
I AM TALKING...

THE WHEEL OF TIME TURNS, BUT THE NATURE OF MAN DOES NOT. STILL THERE ARE SCOUNDRELS, AND STILL THERE ARE CHAMPIONS-- AND STILL THE INNOCENT ARE CAUGHT BETWEEN.

SO IT IS IN THE EVENTS I AM ABOUT TO DESCRIBE, IN A STORY WE MIGHT CALL...

The tale of the mighty Thor and the man who made weather!

LOOKS LIKE THAT "WEATHER-MAKER" LOUSE IS TRAPPED, CAP-- HE'S GOT NOWHERE TO RETREAT TO.

I AGREE, HIGHPOCKETS-- BUT I'M SUSPICIOUS. THERE'S TOO MUCH HERE WE DON'T UNDERSTAND. LIKE WHO HE IS-- AND WHY HE'S DOING THIS!

PLEASE, EVERYONE-- STAY BACK! LET US HANDLE THIS!

C'MON, GIANT-MAN-- QUIT BLOCKIN' THE VIEW!

STRIKE AWAY, HANDSOME!

GIVE BUT THE WORD, CAPTAIN AMERICA-- AND THOR'S HAMMER SHALL STRIKE!

BUT LEAVE SOMETHING FOR THE WINSOME WASP TO CLEAN UP!

ARE WE PLANNING TO TALK HIM INTO UNCONSCIOUSNESS, AVENGERS-- OR ARE WE READY TO TAKE HIM?

AW, WE GOT AS MUCH RIGHT TO SEE THE SHOW AS ANYONE!







THE TROLLS HAVE CHALLENGED ASGARD'S RIGHT OF PASSAGE THROUGH THE NINE WORLDS! THEY ASSEMBLE OUTSIDE THE GATES FOR A WAR-PARLEY--

--AND WE MUST MEET THEM IN STRENGTH! AS PRINCE OF THE REALM, THY PRESENCE IS REQUIRED--WITH-OUT DELAY!



FATHER, MY LOVE FOR THEE AND RESPECT FOR MY DUTY KNOWS NO BOUNDS-- BUT I AM ENGAGED IN COMBAT, EVEN AS WE SPEAK! THE TROLLS MAY BE GATHERING--BUT THERE IS DANGER ON MIDGARD NOW!

I SHALL DO MY BEST TO END THINGS SWIFTLY-- AND WILL JOIN THEE IN ASGARD AS SOON AS I AM ABLE!

THOU DEFIEST THY FATHER? DEFIEST HIS ROYAL ORDER?

HEAR THIS, MY SON--YOU SHALL RETURN TO ASGARD, AND SHALL RETURN BY SUNDOWN! I WILL BROOK NO EXCUSES!

And in a thunderclap heard only by the thunder god--ODIN VANISHED!



While, atop the great structure...

STOP STRUGGLING, MAUREEN--YOU'LL ONLY MAKE THINGS WORSE!

YOU CANNOT ESCAPE ME. AND YOU KNOW-- YOU KNOW YOU ARE THE REASON I DO THIS...

YOU'RE HATEFUL, CARSTAIRS! HATEFUL! I'LL NEVER FORGIVE YOU--AND I HOPE THEY LOCK YOU UP AND THROW AWAY THE KEY!



YOU'LL CHANGE YOUR TUNE, MAUREEN, I'M--EH?!

WHO DARES--?!

THE NAME'S CAPTAIN AMERICA, FRIEND. MAYBE YOU'VE HEARD OF ME.

YOU LET DOWN YOUR GUARD FOR AN INSTANT-- BUT THAT WAS ALL I NEEDED!







It would be SUNDOWN soon, and the thunder god KNEW it. But he felt the young woman's FAINT, RAGGED BREATH against his chest-- and KNEW he could not merely turn her over to others and depart...

I-- I MUST--
-- I CAN'T--



NO!

I SHALL SEE TO HER TREATMENT, AVENGERS! DO NOT FEAR-- SHE WILL GET THE BEST MEDICAL ATTENTION-- THE BEST! WHATEVER THE COST!

HUH?
WHAT--WHAT
WAS THAT
ALL ABOUT?



Soon, in the chambers of a local healer...

JANE FOSTER!

PREPARE FOR AN OPERATION-- THIS YOUNG WOMAN WILL NOT SURVIVE WITHOUT SPEEDY MINISTRATIONS!

THOR!

Y-YES, OF COURSE-- I'LL GET RIGHT ON IT! BUT DR. BLAKE-- HE ISN'T HERE RIGHT NOW--!



HE WILL BE.

JUST SEE TO THE PREPARATIONS, NURSE FOSTER.

And sure enough, once the HELP-MAID was gone...



...Thor knelt, and with the merest TAP of Mjolnir 'gainst the floor...

...he WAS TRANS-FORMED!

ALL RIGHT, GIRL-- THOR'S DONE HIS BEST. NOW LET'S SEE WHAT I CAN DO FOR YOU...













AND, IN THE DUNGEONS USED IN THIS LINE TO HOLD PRISONERS AWAITING JUDGMENT...

HEY, WEATHER-BY-- HOW 'BOUT MAKIN' IT RAIN FOR ME ON SUNDAY? I PROMISED THE OLD LADY I'D TAKE HER TO THE FLOWER SHOW--

-- BUT I REALLY DON'T WANT TO, KNOW WHAT I MEAN?

HEY, WHATSAMATTER? NOT SUCH A BIG SHOT WITHOUT YOUR DOO-DADS AND GIZMOS, HUH?

LEAVE ME, YOU IMBECILE. CONFINEMENT IS BAD ENOUGH, WITHOUT HAVING TO ENDURE YOUR HUMOR, AS WELL!



GOOD. HE'S GONE!

THE FOOLS-- TO THINK I WOULDN'T HAVE A CONTINGENCY PLAN FOR THIS VERY SITUATION!



THIS-- NYN! FALSE TOOTH, JAMMED WITH CIRCUITRY, IS ALL I NEED! I NEVER HAD THE CHANCE TO TEST IT--

-- BUT IT SHOULD CALL A STORM TO ME, TO FREE ME.



AND I'LL NEED A POWERFUL STORM INDEED TO SHATTER THESE WALLS!



SO REACH OUT, MY LITTLE TECHNOLOGICAL WONDER! REACH OUT-- AROUND THE WORLD-- AND FIND THE MOST VIOLENT STORM YOU CAN!

REACH OUT, AND--

-- AH! GOT SOMETHING! BUT--



WHAT--?

MY MIND-- FLOODING WITH DARKNESS! WHAT--

WHAT HAVE I CONTACTED?



YOU HAVE CALLED, MORTAL. YOU HAVE CALLED...

... AND I HAVE ANSWERED!

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NEXT: The Tale of the Mighty Thor... and the man called TORRENT







Book One

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